

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - FOREST SERVICE
CALIFORNIA FOREST AND RANGE EXPERIMENT STATION
Division of Forest Insect Research

FOREST INSECT CONDITIONS
MOUNTAIN HOME INFESTATION AREA
MOUNTAIN HOME STATE FOREST AND SEQUOIA
NATIONAL FOREST, CALIFORNIA
MAY 1954
RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY

On May 10 and 11, 1954, an examination was made of second-growth mixed stands on the Mountain Home State Forest and Sequoia National Forest to determine the extent of mountain pine beetle damage reported in this area. This examination was prompted by observations made by the Office of Blister Rust Control during the course of a sugar pine delineation cruise in 1953.^{1/} The inspection party consisted of John Carigozian, Neil MacGregor and G. K. Fox, U. S. Forest Service; Floyd Otter, California Division of Forestry; and G. L. Downing and R. H. Cope, California Forest and Range Experiment Station. In addition to the ground survey, the area was inspected from the air during a flight made by Fox and Downing on May 11, in conjunction with a Division of Fish and Game salt-dropping program.

The infestation area is located in T. 19 and 20 S., R. 30 E., sec. 35, 36, 1, and 2 MDM. This area lies in a basin which is drained to the west by Bear Creek. Dense second-growth stands predominate as a result of heavy logging around the turn of the century. These stands consist mainly of sugar pine and incense-cedar, with white fir, ponderosa pine and giant Sequoia sprinkled throughout. At the lower elevations ponderosa pine predominates, while at the higher elevations white fir and giant Sequoia are most prevalent.

Heavy losses in pole-size sugar pine have occurred as a result of the activities of the mountain pine beetle, Dendroctonus monticolae Hopk. These losses probably started five or more years ago, and the ensuing buildup must have reached its peak in either 1951 or 1952. Since that time losses have fallen off rapidly and at present the infestation is at a low level. No control work has been carried on in the area, and the rapid drop in losses, in the last two or three years, is undoubtedly due to natural factors. Most of the tree mortality has occurred in the form of large group kills in dense stands of thrifty appearing pole-size sugar pine. This is very similar to the damage along Miami Creek on the Sierra National Forest where control work was carried on during the spring of 1952 and winter of 1952-53. The Miami Creek infestation was the first of its kind on record - that of large-scale killing of pole-size sugar pine by the mountain pine beetle. The detection of the Mountain Home infestation brings up the question of whether or not this type of loss is to become more and more important as dense second-growth stands in old cutover areas reach this apparently critical stage in their development. Only time will answer this question.

^{1/} Sugar Pine Delineation, Project Report 1954, U. S. Forest Service, Blister Rust Control Unit, by Neil J. MacGregor, March 31, 1954.

In view of the fact that the outbreak has declined, no control work is recommended at the present time. The area should be kept under surveillance, however, so that prompt action may be taken if any increase in the present mountain pine beetle population appears imminent.

Berkeley, California
June 2, 1954

G. L. Downing
Entomologist